

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 50

INFO CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1003

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, US, RP

SUBJECT: EUGENIO LOPEZ, JR.

1. EMBASSY HAS LEARNED FROM SENIOR MERALCO OFFICIAL THAT EUGENIO LOPEZ JR. AUTHORIZED HIS LAWYERS ON JANUARY 14 TO OFFER TO MALACANANG DEAL WHEREBY LOPEZ JR. WOULD BE RELEASED FROM DETENTION AND WOULD FORTHWITH LEAVE THE PHILIPPINES FOR US. SOURCE SAID DEAL HAS SOME ATTRACTION FOR MALACANANG BECAUSE IT WOULD REMOVE LOPEZ JR. FROM LOCAL SCENE; APPARENTLY, ACCORDING TO MERALCO SOURCE, PHILIPPINE INTELLIGENCE SERVICES WERE TAKEN ABACK BY AMOUNT OF ATTENTION GIVEN TO LOPEZ JR. BY ADMIRERS ON OCCASIONS WHEN HE HAS BEEN OUT OF DETENTION FOR SHORT PERIODS. MERALCO SOURCE SAID MALACANANG APPARENTLY FEARS THAT LOPEZ JR. COULD BECOME RALLYING POINT FOR OPPOSITIONIST ELEMENTS. IN EVENT LOPEZ JR. OFFER TO DEPART PHILIPPINES AFTER RELEASED FROM DETENTION ACCEPTED, LOPEZ ADHERENTS BELIEVE DEAL WILL RESULT IN LATE FEBRUARY RELEASE.

2. COMPLICATING FACTOR IN TRANSACTION IS REGULARIZING TRANSFER OF ABS-CBN ASSETS FROM LOPEZ INTERESTS TO MARCOS INTERESTS. MERALCO SOURCE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT LOPEZS REGARD MARCOS TAKEOVER OF ABS-CBN AS FAIT ACCOMPLI AND THEY PREPARED TO ACCEPT VIRTUALLY ANY DEAL THAT WOULD RESULT IN LOPEZ JRS. RELEASE.

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3. SOURCE DID NOT KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR OSMENA OR LEHMAN RELEASES.

4. SOURCE THIS REPORT HIGHLY KNOWLEDGABLE ABOUT INNER WORKINGS LOPEZ EMPIRE. AND APPEARED RATHER CONFIDENT THAT LOPEZ JR'S. OFFER TO DEPART PHILIPPINES WOULD BE ACCEPTABLE TO MALACANANG. HOWEVER, SOURCE CAUTIONED THAT EUGEMIO LOPEZ SR. HAD WORKED OUT OTHER VARIATIONS OF DEALS TO RELEASE LOPEZ JR. WHICH HAD ABORTED.

5. COMMENT: IF THIS INFORMATION CORRECT AND MARCOS COMTEMPLATING FEBRUARY RELEASE OF EUGENIO LOPEZ JR., IT OF CONSIDERABLE INTEREST THAT POSSIBLE RELEASE WOULD FALL IN SAME TIME FRAME AS HOLDING OF REFERENDUM. SUCH NEAT COINCIDENCES ARE CONSISTENT WITH MARCOS' MULTI-DIMENSIONAL PLANNING. QUESTION IS WHETHER MARCOS ALSO PLANS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT CASES OF OSMENA AND LEHMAN AT SAME TIME. EMBASSY WILL FOLLOW THESE DEVELOPMENTS CLOSELY.
SULLIVAN

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